

## Today's News - Tuesday, September 6, 2016

EDITOR'S NOTE: A lot of catching up to do after being away so long! And just a heads-up that we might have even more catching up to do if yours truly begins jury tomorrow morning - we'll know tonight, and you'll know tomorrow if ANN isn't in your inbox.

- A sad way to start the week: We lose Jane Thompson (a.k.a. "Sir Lady Jane"), who "called herself an 'architect without portfolio.'"
- And some grumpy ways to start the week: Dickinson delves into 10 ways "the profession sabotages its value and relevance" ("must-cantilever will soon follow shipping containers, blobitecture, and Corbu glasses into the dustbin of been-there/done-that").
- Krier makes the case that the public is "entitled to their architectural preferences and modernists have no right to judge them."
- Dunlap is more than disappointed to discover that, beyond the "bravura" of Calatrava's World Trade Center Transit Hub, it "is - and was always intended to be - a shopping mall with an ancillary transportation purpose."
- A most thoughtful profile of al-Sabouni and her "architectural autopsy" on her home town of Homs, Syria, and how the "failings of design and infrastructure paved the way for its eventual destruction" (do take the time to link to her TED Talk!).
- Zeiger is so distressed by the "scorching summer of bigotry and violence," she's taken to bed: "Architecture can feel like a paltry gesture in times like ours," but "we still need to get out of bed."
- Dittmar digs into why "we don't have the choice" anymore between mitigating emissions and building climate resilient cities and towns: "architecture and urban planning are going to be critical."
- Architects Advocate Action on Climate Change is a new, "industry-focused public outreach campaign to push for meaningful legislation on climate change - don't remain silent."
- After the earthquakes of August, Italy's Prime Minister asks Piano to help in reconstruction; he comes up with "a far more comprehensive proposal" (he is a Senator-for-life, after all).
- Jacobs cheers how Svigals + Partners "navigated a fraught commission" to rebuild Sandy Hook elementary school in Newtown, CT: "The end result is a fascinating study in what happens when a firm invests its ego in the quality of its collaboration with the people who will use them" (ducks included).
- Hawthorne gives (mostly) thumbs-up to Svigals' Sandy Hook school: "The architects had to fight to protect some of their more ambitious design features from the sort of cost-cutting that is all too typical in public-school construction."
- Brandes Gratz "clears up some misperceptions" about Jane Jacobs: she didn't want "every neighborhood to be like Greenwich Village. If she pushed anything, it was primarily the value of local wisdom and the need to get out and observe, observe, observe."
- Misra parses new research by the Urban Institute that "makes the case for preservation instead of construction" of affordable housing, with examples "that have successfully preserved existing affordable stock."
- Making the case for why McMansions should go the way of the dodo: aside from "shoddy construction and ostentatious design," they have low resale values "because the market considers the homes an ugly investment, too."
- ljeH offers a round-up of BD's shortlist for the 2016 Carbuncle Cup (w/links to great write-ups - winner announced tomorrow).
- A good reason to head to London tomorrow: the first London Design Biennale has more than 30 countries and territories exploring the theme "Utopia by Design."
- An impressive shortlist of six teams now vies to win London's Illuminated River International Design Competition (we only listed team leaders - check out the rest of an impressive roster of team mates!).
- An inspiring list of six finalists now vies for the 2016 Fuller Challenge \$100,000 prize.

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Obituary: Jane Thompson, 89, award-winning designer, urban planner: ...called herself an "architect without portfolio"...Yet...she helped transform urban shopping...a founding co-editor of the magazine Industrial Design [I.D.], and she joined [Benjamin Thompson & Associates] in the 1960s. They married and went on to collaborate on festival marketplaces, the Harvest restaurant in Harvard Square, and the iconic retail store Design Research [D/R] store in Cambridge. - Boston Globe

In Architects We Trust? 10 Trusts Worth Busting: How the profession sabotages its value and relevance: ...architects trust in the fashions of our profession to the point where we become caricatures of ourselves. Here's some things architects often trust that delude our value and sabotage our relevance. By Duo Dickinson - Common Edge

People have to be brainwashed to appreciate the Southbank or Robin Hood Gardens: The public are entitled to their architectural preferences and modernists have no right to judge them: The question is...not what is wrong with people's judgement and tastes, but what is wrong with the mind-set which dominates the architectural profession and education. By Leon Krier - BD/Building Design (UK)

A Shopping Mall at Ground Zero, Uninformed by Its Sacred Land: Apart from the bravura of Santiago Calatrava's design...this mall could be just about anywhere...I failed to pay enough attention to the role played by Westfield America...That left me susceptible to the official line that the Oculus was a transportation center with shops appended. It is now clear that [it] is - and was always intended to be - a shopping mall with an ancillary transportation purpose. By David W. Dunlap [images] - New York Times

Trapped in Homs, Architect Imagines a New Future for Syrian Cities: In a Ted talk ["How Syria's architecture laid the foundation for brutal war"]...and book, "The Battle for Home: The Vision of a Young Architect in Syria," Marwa al-Sabouni performs a kind of architectural autopsy on her native city, cataloging failings of design and infrastructure that she said paved the way for its eventual destruction. By Stephen Heyman - New York Times

Architecture can feel like a paltry gesture in times like ours: ...meaningful architectural reactions to crises may take time, but quick temporary structures can be just as effective, and both are far preferable to not responding at all...I admit it...In the midst of a scorching summer of bigotry and violence...I've taken to bed...Despite its inherent lethargy...Meaningful response is a deliberate process. Slowness, however, is not the same as the lack response. We still need to get out of bed. By Mimi Zeiger - Dezeen

[Hurricane Katrina, the US East Coast's Hurricane Sandy and flooding in Gloucestershire and Cumbria]  
Architects are critical to adapting our cities to climate change: For many years, climate policy experts didn't discuss adaptation to climate, for fear that it would distract from mitigating emissions. Now, however, we don't have the choice, and architecture and urban planning are going to be critical in building climate resilient cities and towns. By Hank Dittmar - BD/Building Design (UK)

Chicago architects join up for climate change advocacy campaign: Architects Advocate Action on Climate Change [launched] with 70-plus firms on September 1: ...a new, industry-focused public outreach campaign...to push for meaningful legislation on climate change..."At this point, we're asking one thing: don't remain silent"... By Patrick Sisson - Curbed

Italy earthquake: Prime Minister asks Renzo Piano to help in reconstruction: ...amid plans to rehouse displaced residents in lightweight wooden homes...While calling for more to be done to reinforce anti-seismic regulations, Piano outlined a far more comprehensive proposal to protect Italy's public buildings, homes and cultural sites over the next 50 years. - Guardian (UK)

Sandy Hook Rebuilds: How Svigals + Partners "spoke to the heart" and navigated a fraught commission: ... "The community voice was the most compelling piece of the process"...the new [school] is distinguished by an abundance of thoughtful touches...And, of course, there are ducks...The end result is a fascinating study in what happens when...a firm invests its ego not in the formal attributes of its buildings but in the quality of its collaboration with the people who will use them. By Karrie Jacobs [images]- Architect Magazine

At Sandy Hook Elementary, a new campus and a new start at site of horror: The architects had to fight to protect some of their more ambitious design features from the sort of cost-cutting that is all too typical in public-school construction...Still, there are hints in the Svigals + Partners approach...of what a more searching, powerful design might have looked like. By Christopher Hawthorne [images]- Los Angeles Times

More Thoughts on Jane Jacobs from One of Her Closest Collaborators: Roberta Brandes Gratz clears up some misperceptions about the legendary urbanist: ... (i.e. she wanted every neighborhood to be like Greenwich Village...she was somehow to blame for the ills of gentrification)...Jane was...not a prescribing advocate. If she pushed anything, it was primarily the value of local wisdom and the need to get out and observe, observe, observe. - Common Edge

Got an Affordable Housing Crisis? Save the Cheap Housing You Already Have: Researchers at the Urban Institute make the case for preservation instead of construction...we can't just build our way out of the problem...six examples from around the country that have successfully preserved existing affordable stock. Here's how they did it. By Tanvi Misra- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

McMansions Define Ugly in a New Way: They're a Bad Investment: Shoddy construction, ostentatious design - and low resale values: ...owners are losing out because the market considers their homes an ugly investment, too. By Patrick Clark- Bloomberg News

Carbuncle Cup 2016 shortlist unveiled: The six-strong shortlist was selected from 10 projects nominated by readers and represents some of Britain's worst buildings...sadly, yet again, there is no shortage of contenders. By Ike Ijeh -- Rolfe Judd; Twelve Architects; RHWL Architects; Intelligent Design Centre; Make Architects; BUJ Architects [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

The World re-imagines the World: The first London Design Biennale will open this September at Somerset House with over 30 countries and territories participating (September 7 – 27). Nations from six continents will present newly commissioned works that explore the theme Utopia by Design. - London Design Biennale

Illuminated River International Design Competition shows London is top destination for global creative talent: ...nearly half the submissions coming from overseas...Six shortlisted teams will now create concept design lighting schemes for London's famous bridges. -- Adjaye Associates; AL\_A; Diller Scofidio + Renfro; Les Éclairagistes Associés; Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands; Sam Jacob Studio and Simon Heijdens - Malcolm Reading Consultants / Illuminated River Foundation

Announcing the 2016 Fuller Challenge Finalists: These six Finalists...are under consideration for selection to win the grand prize and an award of \$100,000...geographically diverse applicants working in communities and eco-systems around the world. -- Cooperación Comunitaria; CommuniTree by Taking Root; Waterbank Schools by PITCHAfrica; Una Hakika by the Sentinel Project; Urban Death Project; Rainforest Solutions Project- Buckminster Fuller Institute

ANN feature: One-on-One: "Architecture is the Construction of a New World": Interview with Nikita Yaveyn: The Russian architect talks about creative freedom (and sometimes lack thereof), wooden architecture, and what St. Petersburg might look like in 50 years. By Vladimir Belogolovsky [images]- ArchNewsNow

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